

WINTER DROPS IN ON XMAS

STORM CENTRE GOES BY US, LEAVING 3 INCHES OF SNOW.

Fifty Mile Wind Blowing at Midnight
—Enough Fall to Have Made 18 Inches in Cold Weather—Traffic Delayed—Edwards Wants Lots of Help.

With cold weather there would have been eighteen inches of snow in these parts by midnight last night instead of five. The other thirteen inches that may have started as snow either turned to rain on the way or melted after falling. There was some prospect of a letup at midnight, but as the prediction is for more snow and colder weather to-day we may be in for greater trouble to traffic than arose last night. The wind got up close to 50 miles an hour from the northeast at midnight and is expected to go around to-day to north and northwest and drift the drier snow. The sticky stuff that fell yesterday plastered the trees with white, and south of Washington it knocked out telegraph lines. Navigation was made dangerous and all hands were on duty in the coast life saving stations.

The storm began down in the Southwest. Friday morning the storm centre was over northern Texas, yesterday morning it had moved up to the Mississippi Valley and was heading for New York. The snow began here at 10:57 o'clock yesterday morning. It dribbled along until dark and then fell more heavily. At 8 o'clock last night the storm centre had moved up nearer, at 10 o'clock it was over eastern Pennsylvania and western New Jersey and at midnight it had moved off the Jersey coast south of us. The bottom fell out of the barometer along in the afternoon, but it is now rising.

Down at Atlantic City it was raining hard last night and the wind was blowing on shore at a good clip. There was snow at Albany, Boston, Buffalo and Washington. They were making big preparations for clearing the streets last night at the snow office of the Street Cleaning Department. The actual work of shovelling snow wasn't begun last night as the men in charge figured that the best way was to let the storm play itself out first. The telephones were working hard calling up all the big team owners in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Jersey City. The directors of the shovel were having their troubles for they couldn't land as many teams as they needed. It was Christmas night and the drivers had gone home early. To-day being Sunday they didn't expect to show up until late, if at all. But the team owners were making promises and agreed to send around word to their men to come to work this morning.

Commissioner Edwards hasn't let out any regular contracts yet for snow removal. The latter part of last winter he tried the experiment of hiring his own men and doing the job himself. It was successful enough to convince him that the system could be worked, and last night's storm, the first heavy one of the season, found him working under those conditions.

There are, however, a number of emergency contracts for just such occasions as these, and the team owners who hold these contracts were instructed last night that they would be expected to come up with the required number of wagons and men.

The bread line will have a chance to work to-day. Instructions were sent out last night to all the district superintendents to hire all the men that applied for jobs. They expect to get a great crowd.

Commissioner Edwards was at the snow office last night directing the preparations and both he and Deputy Commissioner Hogan will be out bright and early this morning.

Big Bill said that he didn't expect to go to bed at all. He was going to stick to the job of plotting out the city into districts, organizing gangs and giving instructions to the superintendents. He had intended to open the bids for contracts next Friday and this storm had to be handled by temporary job lot contracts to individual firms and men and by the department's men. His organization was pretty well completed at midnight and he wasn't anticipating much trouble. If the slush freezes up he may be bothered by it. The plan last night was to get men and teams on the street by 5 o'clock this morning at the latest.

The scraper of a southbound Third Avenue train caused a short circuit at the Eighteenth street station at ten minutes after 10, tying up the road for nearly an hour. At 11 o'clock the train dispatcher reported that there had been no other delays.

The Metropolitan Street Railway people reported at the same hour that they had had no trouble whatever. Their sweepers and ploughs had been running for several hours and the tracks were clear everywhere.

The Brooklyn surface cars became pretty well tied up. The elevated trains kept going, but the snow on the third rail put them well behind their schedule. The Church Avenue and Nostrand Avenue surface lines were blocked and it looked as if they might have to give up until morning. About 10 o'clock a Bergen Street car got stuck crossing Smith Street and tied up both lines for a while. By the time they got the car going again the block was close to hopeless.

Down around Fort Hamilton, Bay Ridge and Bath Beach the elevated trains were infrequent and the Christmas travellers crowded them to overflowing or stood out unprotected in the gale. A number of small boats anchored in Sheepshead Bay broke away from their moorings and were carried off. The water at Coney Island was exceptionally high, mounting over the bulkhead at the foot of the Ocean Boulevard and doing considerable damage to the bathhouses. Several men were hurt in accidents due to the high wind.

There was a good deal of difficulty with the surface cars at the Manhattan end of the Brooklyn Bridge. Most of the lines that ran across the span were off their schedules and the uniformed men in the neighborhood of the bridge were advising

every one to take either the subway or the elevated trains to Brooklyn. Trolley lines throughout Queens county were practically tied up by 11 o'clock. The New York and Queens County Railroad, which runs through Woodside, Corona, Elmhurst, Jamaica and other towns, and the Brooklyn lines covering the same territory gave up long before midnight. Gangs of men had been sent out to supplement the sweepers, but as fast as they cleared the tracks the wind blew the snow back again.

All of the late trains on the Long Island Railroad were behind time, and two locomotives were used on many trains. In the railroad yards at Long Island City the pneumatic switches were kept open by means of blowing oil, which melted the snow as fast as it fell. The yards looked as though they were on fire.

On Long Island Sound the weather was so thick that practically all shipping put into the nearest port. On the Atlantic side the life savers doubled their patrol. Ferryboats between New York and Brooklyn were able to feel their way across the river only at the slowest pace.

People who had to go to the country and Long Island folk who had spent the day in Manhattan were stalled all along the Queens car lines. Stations and waiting rooms were full of them, and the indications were that many of them would not be able to reach home last night at all. The New York Central through trains from the West were between three and four hours late. These delays were occasioned by conditions west of Albany, as between New York and Albany trains were running on time.

The New Haven line had not got into much trouble yet, though local trains were fifteen minutes or more late.

On the Pennsylvania Railroad trains east bound were delayed from thirty minutes to hours. The dining car of the Congressional Limited left the track as the train was passing Millstone Junction, a little below New Brunswick, on its way to New York. The accident happened at 8:15 P. M. while passengers were eating Christmas dinners. The car was not overturned, and according to the railroad people no one was hurt. The train is due at Jersey City at 10 o'clock and got in just two hours late.

The wreck helped the storm to tie up the road so that its schedule was knocked out. One trouble, the railroad people said, was that they had called on the contractors for 1,500 men to handle the snow, and because of Christmas the contractors could muster but 150. The snow too filled the air so that the engineers had trouble reading signals and had to slow down continually for this purpose.

Between 6 and 7 o'clock last night some of the telegraph wires between New York and Washington were down, but they were soon repaired. Throughout most of the Southern States along the Atlantic seaboard wires were down for several hours. It was with difficulty that communication between Washington, Jacksonville, Atlanta, Tampa and Richmond was maintained and for part of the night Washington could not get any of those cities.

Bridge Squad D of the Police Department had a check for quarters under the Manhattan end of the new Manhattan Bridge. This shack was blown off its piers into the East River and floated away. A plate glass window 6 by 12 feet in a jewelry shop on the Twenty-second street side of the Flatiron Building was blown into the street. Nobody was hit.

The wind blew out a plate glass window in the front of T. Kirkpatrick & Co's jewelry store at 34 Fifth Avenue. A watchman stood guard over the opening until a policeman came.

CHICAGO SHORT OF COAL.

Famine Feared Unless There is a Favorable Change of Weather.

CHICAGO, Dec. 25.—Chicago is facing a coal famine. That a scarcity of fuel already exists was admitted to-night by railroad men, mine owners and coal dealers, who are striving to avert a more serious condition, which depends entirely upon the weather.

Should to-day's storm continue to more serious proportions, a famine, coal men say, cannot be averted, and railroad men to-night were apprehensive that even the snow of yesterday and to-day would impede the extra work planned for to-morrow in rushing coal into Chicago.

Every man interested in the situation blames the weather for the present stringency. Railroad men say the cold weather and the storms have impeded transportation so that they have been unable to bring the coal here. Coal men say the weather has caused extra demands to be made on their limited supplies. Mine owners say the weather prevents the railroads from taking the coal from the mines.

The railroad men were free in admitting that the worst congestion in a long time is being experienced by the different roads. North, East and West conditions are the same as in Chicago. Traffic is delayed and freight is held back.

TRAIN HELD BY BLIZZARD.

Passengers in Danger of Death From Cold and Hunger.

BURMA VISTA, Col., Dec. 25.—With the mercury 10 below zero, a blizzard raging and snow banked higher than the cars in front and behind, a score of passengers on a Colorado and Southern narrow gauge train have been snowbound on Alpine Pass for twenty-eight hours.

When they will be rescued is problematical. They have no provisions and little coal and may freeze before help reaches them.

A brakeman, nearly dead from cold and exhaustion, reached the nearest station and wired here for help and a relief train started four hours ago, but has made little progress owing to the deep snow banked in cuts and the gale which blows snow in faster than it can be shoveled out.

Nebraska Roads Gripped by Blizzard.
OMAHA, Neb., Dec. 25.—Traffic on roads operating in Nebraska was practically suspended to-day as a result of the blizzard, which swept over the State last night.

Rotary snow ploughs were sent out early this morning by the Rock Island Railway to clear the tracks of the drifts formed by the high wind in the night. Trains are moving now and it is expected that the situation will be greatly improved by to-morrow morning.

Submarine Sunk by Ice.
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GEORGE P. SHELDON IS DEAD

PASSED AWAY UNAWARE THAT HE HAD BEEN INDICTED.

Former President of the Phenix Fire Insurance Company Had Been Unconscious, Except for Brief Intervals, for Six Weeks—His Business Career.

GREENWICH, Conn., Dec. 25.—George Preston Sheldon, the deposed president of the Phenix Insurance Company, died at 7:25 o'clock this morning at his home, The Maples.

His illness was due to ptomaine poisoning contracted late in October. A dropsical condition developed later. He had but few lucid intervals in the last six weeks.

The illness covered the period during which the revelations in regard to the Phenix were made, and Sheldon died without knowing that he was indicted on charges of grand larceny amounting to \$45,000 and that a bench warrant had been issued for his arrest.

The proceedings were halted when it was learned that Sheldon was too ill to be moved. His death terminates the criminal action, but if there was any basis for civil proceedings these may be continued against his estate.

Mr. Sheldon was born in New York City on January 17, 1847, the son of Charles Sheldon of Rutland, Vt. He was graduated from Yale in the class of 1867. There he was a member of the Scroll and Key society and the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity. He studied law in the Columbia Law School and a few years after graduation became a member of the firm of Sewell, Pierce & Sheldon. His home at that time was in Brooklyn. He was counsel for the Phenix Insurance Company and later became a member of its directors.

In 1888 he was made president of the Phenix and undertook the work of reorganizing the company. At various times he served as president of the National Board of Underwriters, president of the Eastern Insurance Union and president of the Factory Insurance Association. He was very active in insurance organizations and at the time of his death was chairman of the committee on law and legislation of the national board and a member of the executive committee. He was also a director and a member of the executive committee of the American Light and Traction Company and director in the Southern Light and Traction Company and the Underwriters Salvage Company.

He was president of the New York Club and a member of the University Club, the White Club, Lamb Club, Downtown Association, Alpha Delta Phi Association, Greenwich Country Club and the Apawamis, Garden City and Knollwood golf clubs. He was a member of the executive committee of the Metropolitan Golf Association.

Mr. Sheldon had been president of the Phenix, a \$1,500,000 fire insurance company with offices in Manhattan, for twenty-two years when the directors removed him from office on December 6 last. The action was taken at the instance of the Insurance Department, which believed that writing off a million of the company's \$3,000,000 surplus would balance the losses due to its transactions.

The accusations advanced by the department included speculating with the funds of the company, maintaining a speculative margin account in its name, putting up its assets as collateral, drawing on the account in the brokerage office and converting the proceeds of the drafts to his own use.

The company itself was accused of making false reports to the department for the last ten years and lending its money in violation of law to Mr. Sheldon and the secretary, Charles F. Koster. Superintendent of Insurance W. H. Hotchkiss declared at the time that a very large surplus was still left, the capital was unimpaired and that the policyholders were still secure.

The Phenix directors elected E. W. T. Gray, auditor of the Continental Insurance Company, to the place of Mr. Sheldon, and Henry Evans, the Continental's president, director of the Phenix and chairman of the executive committee of the board. Secretary Koster's resignation was accepted, as was that of John Carledge, one of the directors, who withdrew to make a vacancy for Mr. Evans. The old board of directors was blamed by Mr. Hotchkiss for letting Mr. Sheldon run the company as he pleased.

The Insurance Superintendent laid the case before District Attorney Jerome, who assigned Assistant District Attorney Nott to take charge of it. Mr. Nott will remain in the District Attorney's office with Mr. Whitman.

On December 8 Sheldon was indicted. The indictment was found on testimony to the effect that Sheldon had used the company's funds on four occasions in 1908 for his own speculative purposes. One transaction involved \$15,000 and there were three others of \$10,000 each. It was charged that Sheldon conducted a speculative account, purporting to be in behalf of the company, with the brokerage firm of Carter, Wilder & Co. The witnesses before the Grand Jury were Edwin H. Carter of the brokerage firm, R. L. Doremus, note taker of the Chatham National Bank; Frederick Cutler, a clerk of the brokerage firm, and Charles S. Koster, secretary of the Phenix.

It also developed that Mr. Sheldon was instrumental in defeating Gov. Hughes's first attempt to oust Otto Kelsey in 1907. He bribed Isaac Vanderpool, the department's chief examiner, and Robert H. Hunter, who was Deputy Superintendent for a good many years. The report of Mr. Hotchkiss on the Phenix showed that this testimony had been given to the Senate Judiciary Committee by Sheldon after he had loaned Vanderpool \$100,000 and Hunter about \$60,000, so Mr. Hotchkiss said, of the Phenix's money. Both men had consulted him in regard to conditions of fire insurance companies after the San Francisco fire.

Following the issue of a warrant on December 14 a detective was sent to Greenwich to place the document in the hands of the local authorities. Word had already gone to Mr. Jerome from Dr. Samuel Lambert that Mr. Sheldon was too ill to be moved, but the customary routine in extradition proceedings went on.

The funeral will be held at 3 o'clock on Monday at the residence of H. L. Carmichael in Greenwich.

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NINETY HORSES BURNED.

Millbrook Boarding Stables on East 90th Street Destroyed—Eight Animals Saved.

A fire started on the second floor of the Millbrook Boarding Stables, 321 and 323 East Ninety-eighth street, at 9:30 o'clock last evening. Ninety horses and thirty-five wagons and harness were lost. The damage is estimated at \$40,000.

The building is a four story brick structure in the middle of the block and extends through to Ninety-seventh street. Directly opposite are the gas tanks of the Consolidated Gas Company and on Ninety-seventh street is a row of tenement houses. As soon as the fire was discovered the gas company had the tanks emptied and the police ordered all the tenants to leave the tenements.

Battalion Chief Dougherty turned in a second and a third alarm as soon as he arrived, as the fire was spreading rapidly.

In a few minutes the entire west wall collapsed and engine company 22 lost its hose line.

Later Firemen McPhallen and Lenthall of Engine 5 were picked up in the yard badly bruised and shaken. They had fallen from a ladder.

The wind was east and the flames were blown toward a vacant lot and low buildings west of the stables, at no time endangering the tenements or tanks. By 10:30 o'clock the fire was under control.

Chief Croker arrived soon after the third alarm and W. N. Thompson of the high pressure service came in an automobile with Deputy Commissioner Loughman of the Water Department. Mr. Thompson said that if the firemen had been under control in twenty minutes.

The stables belong to Benjamin Roth, a produce merchant, and are occupied by about a hundred horses belonging to peddlers and produce dealers. Only eight horses were saved.

SUFFOCATED BY SMOKE.

Policeman Dunn Rescues Five Persons, but Couldn't Save Mrs. Murphy.

A woman was killed by suffocation in a small fire which started a little before 7 o'clock last night in the three story tenement at 35 Eighth Avenue. The fire was confined to the stairs and hallway and the money loss was only about \$500.

A passerby discovered the fire and told Police Officer J. Dunn of the Charles street station about it. Dunn tried to get in by the street door, which opens into a hallway between a tailor shop and a paint and paper shop. The door was locked. Dunn then got a ladder and went up the escape.

The policeman brought down a seven-year-old girl, Helen Holman, and then her mother, Mary Holman. He returned up the fire escape, and one by one brought down Henry Miller, 31 years old, and his daughter, Margaret Miller, and Daniel Murphy, 30 years old. Murphy was pretty well knocked out by smoke, but managed to say that his wife was in the building.

Dunn went back for her and searched over the second floor, on which he had found Murphy. He soon was joined in the search by three firemen from Engine 15. They finally found Mrs. Murphy on the top floor, dead from suffocation. Murphy had groped his way down stairs and had been unable to tell where he had left his wife.

The firemen put out the small blaze in short order. Dunn inhaled a good deal of smoke and had to be treated by an ambulance surgeon.

WOMAN AS BURGLARS LOOKOUT?

What Neighbors Saw When Wasserman's Store Was Being Robbed.

A woman in black, who acted as lookout, helped a fire break in the department store of Harry Wasserman at 375-79 Grand street, Williamsburg, early yesterday morning. After blowing open the safe the thieves secured \$951 in money and diamond jewelry worth nearly \$1,000 belonging to Mrs. Wasserman, who placed the jewelry in the safe on Christmas eve.

Wasserman's store is about sixty feet above Marcy Avenue. On account of the Christmas trade he didn't close up until 10 o'clock yesterday morning. At that time he placed the receipts of the afternoon and evening, consisting of \$900 in bills, \$100 in gold and \$61 in small change, in a small safe about four feet high which was in the rear of the store at 377 and visible from the street. The three stores are about one hundred feet deep and are connected in the back by a wide corridor.

Just before Wasserman was ready to close up two men entered. Wasserman had never seen them before. While one was dicker for the purchase of some handkerchiefs the other was seen to be surveying the rear of the store. When the men went out after making a small purchase Wasserman closed his safe, looked the front doors and after making sure that the gas lights which are left burning all night were in order, accompanied his wife up to their apartments over the store.

It is thought that soon after Wasserman had closed up the burglars entered by one of the basements. They rolled the safe into the corridor where they couldn't be seen from the street, muffled it with dry goods and blew it open.

At about 2 o'clock neighbors noticed a tall woman in black walking to and fro on Grand street at Marcy Avenue. When persons approached she would walk up to Wasserman's store and either cough or give a low whistle. She remained in the neighborhood until after 3 o'clock, when she disappeared in the direction of the Williamsburg Bridge.

Wasserman discovered the robbery at 8 o'clock yesterday morning.

THREE BABIES FOR CHRISTMAS.

Stork Plays Beautiful Santa Claus for Poor Cleveland Cabbie.

CLEVELAND, Dec. 25.—The stork played Santa Claus for the six children of Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Frank. The gift was three chubby little girls, the triplets weighing eighteen pounds in all.

Frank, the owner of a little shoe repair shop, and earning with difficulty enough to feed his six children, had been saving what little he could toward the expected event. He could spare nothing to buy Christmas cheer for the six. But they were wild with delight at the gift of three little sisters.

"I didn't expect so many more," said Frank last night, "but I'm proud of them. They're just what they make the best kind of Christmas presents."

DAVEY'S WIVES FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS.
Special Cable Dispatch to The Sun.
—**NEW YORK, Dec. 25.**—Davey's wives for holiday gifts.

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SHOT DOWN BY BURGLARS

IN HENRY DECKER'S HOME ON STATEN ISLAND.

Coachman Then Thrown Into a Ditch and Robbers Got Away With Horse and Carriage—Got Four Bullets in His Back and Lay All Day Unconscious.

William O'Keefe, 45 years old, coachman for Henry Decker at Dongan Hills, Staten Island, was shot four times in the back early yesterday morning in the dining room of his employer's home. Mr. Decker is a business man in this city.

The shooting was done by two burglars whom O'Keefe had found ransacking the dining room. After shooting him the robbers carried O'Keefe out and threw him into an excavation about 100 feet to the rear of the house. He was found there unconscious by Mr. Decker late yesterday afternoon. He is now in the S. R. Smith Infirmary Hospital. The bullets have not yet been extracted. His condition is serious.

When Mr. and Mrs. Decker went out on Friday evening they left the house and stable in charge of O'Keefe, who has been in their employ about a year. When they returned at about 3 o'clock yesterday morning they found the rear door of the house open and there was no sign of the coachman. Mr. Decker shouted his name, thinking he was in the stable, but there was no response. Supposing that the man had fallen asleep, Mr. Decker went to the stable to arouse him, but he was not there.

Entering the house with his wife, Mr. Decker found everything in the dining room in confusion. Dishes that had been on the table were strewn about the floor and neither Decker nor his wife could understand the condition of things, but as nothing appeared to be missing they locked up the house and went to bed.

When he arose Mr. Decker found that O'Keefe had not returned and he began to make inquiries about him, but no one seemed to have seen the missing coachman. Yesterday afternoon while near the excavation Mr. Decker heard a moaning sound and found O'Keefe unconscious in the ditch. He carried him to the house and then called Dr. Devlin, who advised that the man be taken at once to the hospital.

When Dr. Decker visited his stable he found that his last horse, a surrey and two sets of harness were missing.

In the hospital last evening O'Keefe recovered consciousness and was able to give a short account of what had happened before he again sank into a state of insensibility. He said that between midnight and 1 o'clock he noticed that the rear door of the house, which opens into the kitchen was open and he walked through the kitchen and on to the dining room.

He had hardly put his foot across the threshold of the dining room when two men opened fire on him with revolvers. He says they fired at least ten shots and as he turned to retreat, being unarmed, he was hit four times in the back. He fell to the floor, but the men hastily picked him up and carried him out to the excavation, where they threw him into the ditch.

O'Keefe said that he retained consciousness long enough to hear the men break open the stable door and afterward drive off with the rig. He could give only a very meagre description of his assailants.

Shortly before midnight Argato Teitlin, 20 years old, was arrested at Richmond road, Dongan Hills, by Detective Graham on suspicion. The police say that Teitlin had a quarrel with O'Keefe some weeks ago and threatened to "do him up."

O'Keefe insists that he was shot by burglars, and the prisoner says he knows nothing about the shooting.

CLOTHES LINED WITH \$5,000.

Queer Discoveries in London When John Coombe, Executive American, Died.

LONDON, Dec. 25.—Some time ago a man giving the name of John Coombe and saying he was an American took a room in the house of W. Medland, a Government employee in Kew Gardens. He appeared to be about 50 years old and was apparently in poor circumstances. His habits were mysterious. He never went out.

A month ago he was taken ill and removed to a hospital, where he died after an operation. His clothing, as is customary was returned to Medland, who was apparently the only friend the dead man had.

Some days ago Mrs. Medland was discussing with her niece, Mrs. Sholl, the question of the disposal of Coombe's clothing. They were gathering the garments into a parcel, when Mrs. Sholl, noticing a pad in the lining of a waistcoat, tore it open. The women were indescribably surprised to find that the